

12.616 NOTIFICATIONS: DECEASED PERSONS AND POLICE ACTION RESULTING IN LIFE THREATENING INJURIES/DEATH

Reference:

Procedure 12.230 - Fatal Crash Investigation and Placement of Related Charges
Procedure 12.615 - Deceased Persons/Prisoners
Procedure 18.106 - Police Clergy Program
Procedure 18.120 - Standards for Releasing Information to the News Media
Standards Manual - 13.1.5, 55.2.7

Policy:

When life threatening injury or death results from police intervention or action, the Police Chief or designated member of the command staff will endeavor to make personal contact and notification with that person's immediate family. The notification shall include the offer of the use of all available support resources, e.g., Police Clergy, CPAC, etc.

The investigating unit supervisor is responsible for notification of the next of kin for all other incidents.

Police personnel will make death notifications in person whenever possible. Deliver the notification with tact and sensitivity. Before arrival, learn as much as possible about the next of kin. Extra precautions in the notification may be necessary if the next of kin is elderly or of fragile physical or mental health.

Information:

The Hamilton County Coroner's Office aids local police agencies in their investigation of deceased persons. However, notification of the next of kin is the responsibility of the agency investigating the death, not the Coroner's Office.

Procedure:

A. Notification Responsibility:

1. The responding district supervisor is responsible for notifying the next of kin when the district investigates the death.

- a. The district supervisor will make a blotter entry noting the disposition of the notify.
 - b. If the notify is not completed by the end of the initial shift's tour of duty, the following shift officer-in-charge (O.I.C.) will ensure notification attempts continue.
 - 1) At 0800 hours, the O.I.C. will make a blotter entry designating the investigative unit supervisor assigned to continue notification attempts.
 - a) Forward all records of the next of kin investigation and all notification attempt information to the investigative unit O.I.C.
 - 2. Responsibility for notification of the next of kin transfers to the responding supervisor or senior officer of any section/unit taking charge of an investigation. This includes Traffic Unit on auto fatalities or Homicide Unit on any questionable or suspicious deaths.
 - a. The initial responding supervisor will continue notification attempts until investigation responsibility transfers to another investigating unit.
 - b. The district supervisor will make a blotter entry noting the person taking over the responsibility of notification.
- B. Notification Process:
- 1. If the next of kin is present, the responding supervisor will make the notification.
 - 2. If the next of kin is not present and within the City limits:
 - a. Attempt to obtain a member of the Police Clergy Team to assist with the notification.

- 1) Meet the Clergy Team member at a site other than the location of the next of kin. Determine in advance how to present the notification.
- b. Make the notification in person.
3. When the next of kin is in Hamilton County but outside City limits, first notify the local police agency. They may be able to provide information on the next of kin.
 - a. Advise the agency of your estimated time of arrival and request their response.
4. When the next of kin is outside Hamilton County, use Police Communications Section (PCS) for the notification.
 - a. Contact PCS and provide the following information for the notifying agency:
 - 1) Name and address of the next of kin
 - 2) Name of the deceased
 - 3) Name and phone number of the investigating district/section/unit where the family may call for further information
 - 4) Coroner's Office telephone number for further information and funeral home designation
5. After notifying the next of kin, record the following information in the appropriate blotter and in all applicable reports:
 - a. The name of the person contacted, when, and by whom. Note the contacted person's relationship, address, and phone number.
 - b. The teletype message numbers when used, especially when the notify involves outside agencies.
 - 1) When other units make notification of next of kin, someone from the unit will notify the district of occurrence for a blotter entry.

- c. The name of the person contacted at the
Hamilton County Coroner's Office
regarding the next of kin notification.